



Graf addressing mold problems

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – After complaints of mold in leased homes here, repairs are underway.

A collaboration between the U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr directorate of public works housing division and Installation Management Command-Europe resulted in a plan that will fix affected units from the Kaltenbrunn housing area.

Tom Hays, Grafenwoehr's public works chief, said repairs have begun, with the first few units serving as test cases. Hay's explained: "What we want to do is, first, test to be sure that the contractor does work in a professional manner, second, that occupants are properly protected (during the process), and, third, that occupants are satisfied with the work that was done."

Although the process begins with a brief testing phase, Hays offered a reassurance that renovations will meet rigorous standards required by the Army.

"The (home) owners hired a consultant who is experienced in mold remediation, and they've hired a firm that has very, very high qualifications," he said.

TBG Umwelt is the administrative company, or homeowners association, for the Kaltenbrunn units and has been in close contact with Army and German state officials from the time that mold issue concerns were raised during a town hall meeting in late April. The repair work will be subcontracted to several local construction companies under the close scrutiny of TBG Umwelt.

As for the length of time it has taken to resolve the mold issue, Hays explained that it was due to an extensive coordination process and the garrison's insistence in ensuring a sound process.

"We've been working very hard to try and do it right and not include further complications to occupants," Hays said. "The health, safety, and welfare of our Soldiers and Families are our top priority. Quite a bit of coordination work had to be done."

Coordination included everything from bringing in health officials to identify the mold to investigating the cause of the mold and moisture issues to developing an action plan that will fully resolve the problem.

Hays said several causes for the mold and moisture were identified, along with repair measures that include scraping off the mold, taking down wallpaper, repainting areas with mold-repellent paint, repairing leaks, replacing roof windows, and cleaning and re-tiling several of the bathrooms.

During the inspection, Hays said several minor non-mold/moisture related issues were identified and will also be repaired. Those included repairs to toilets, doorbells, windows and roofs.

Bob Arbios, Grafenwoehr housing chief Bob Arbios, said two Kaltenbrunn families have been moved as a result of the mold in their homes, and two more families have received approval to move.

Jeanie Anderson, whose family has been approved to move to new quarters in mid-July is pleased with the garrison's response, saying:

“Housing has done as much as they possibly can. We’re happy with the end result.”

A June 7 letter signed by Arbios has been distributed to Kaltenbrunn residents and encourages family members to call or e-mail the Vilseck housing office to schedule the repairs.

The letter states that “the initial work will take at least part of one day.

“However, in most cases, workers will need to return additional days, to allow for proper treatment and drying and to enable families to always have access to at least one working bathroom. You will be able to remain in your home throughout the entire process as workers will seal off impacted areas.”

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